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ABSTRACT

A report is given on the attitudes of elementary and secondary public school teachers toward public education in the United States. Data were obtained by a nation-wide survey of 1,981 teachers. The report summarizes responses and information on: (1) major study findings; (2) a profile of teachers in the United States; (3) the job satisfaction of the American teacher; (4) teachers' ratings of their own schools; (5) teachers' views on the seriousness of problems in the schools; (6) teachers' reactions to various suggestions for improving the schools; (7) teachers' attitudes toward merit pay and various measures of their performance; and (8) teachers' attitudes toward federal involvement in education. Thirty-two tables present teachers' attitudes and ratings in response to the questionnaire. The first appendix outlines the survey methodology; the second is a copy of the questionnaire used in the survey. (JD)

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The Metropolitan Life Survey Of

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

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The Metropolitan Life Survey Of

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

Conducted for

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

by

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

June 1984

Project Directors:
Louis Harris, Chairman
Joshua D. Libresco, Vice President
Robert P. Parker, Research Director

FOREWARD FROM METROPOLITAN

First-rate public education is the foundation of a dynamic society.

Without quality public school instruction, the United States risks its future in science, technology, finance and other fast-changing fields.

For some 40 million young people now in elementary and secondary schools, the quality of their education is critical to their future, and to ours as well.

A key to better public education is the teacher. Teachers are at the center of the educational experience. Despite enormous daily pressures, they are expected to transmit the accumulated knowledge of decades to children of differing backgrounds, abilities, and needs–a tall order.

If we as a nation truly want quality public education, we must pay more attention to the needs and concerns of teachers. They must be an integral part of any effort to attain a higher level of educational excellence.

This penetrating study dispels some long-standing myths about teachers. It also confirms our respect for teachers as responsible and concerned professionals. Moreover, this is one of the only studies in recent years that actually seeks the views and insights of working teachers throughout the country.

Some of the findings are unexpected–and, we might add, very promising. The results should provide a sound basis for the thoughtful consideration of everyone interested in better teaching and better public education.

Metropolitan commissioned this study as a first step in its commitment to encouraging excellence in public education.

We are particularly pleased to be associated with Louis Harris and his distinguished organization. As expected, they have produced a valuable and much needed look at our public school teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

This study provides the first comprehensive report on the attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers toward public education in the United States.

Until recently, education seemed to be a relatively quiescent subject in public debate. Over the past year, suggestions directed toward improving the quality of education have been the source of major concern and controversy in the educational community, on the political scene, and at the highest levels of government. President Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education was one of the first of many task forces to criticize the basic quality of public education. Many state legislatures have followed suit and have joined in the growing debate over what ought to be done to improve the quality of education in the American public school system.

Although teachers have been the focus of much attention–indeed, often sharp criticism–it seems odd that there has been no more than passing interest in how teachers feel. While the educational leadership of this country has participated in the public dialogue on education, teachers themselves have not been asked what they believe is necessary to improve the system. It is not an overstatement to claim that without the contribution of teachers, neither the dialogue nor the reform that might occur in public education can be viewed as complete.

It is within this framework that the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher was conceived, and it is no surprise to find that a sizable majority of 72-27% of all teachers surveyed simply do not believe that teachers' voices have been adequately heard. (Table 1)

Teachers have been the subject of considerable controversy in the debate on educational quality, and one might expect to find teachers resistant to change. This Metropolitan Life survey of teachers precisely puts this assumption to the test. It measures and analyzes teachers' attitudes toward reform and indicates just how much teachers themselves are willing to be an integral part of the process of reform itself.

Among the key areas covered in depth are:

- How teachers themselves define the seriousness of what have been called problems by various commissions and reports;
- How willing teachers are to accept and to implement major elements of reform that have been suggested for improving the school system;
- How teachers assess their own schools, both in terms of quality of education and as places to work;
- How satisfied teachers are with their jobs; what are their sources of fulfillment and their major frustrations;
- How willing teachers are to change the requirements for students and their work assignments, which could very well mean added work for teachers themselves;
- How much teachers are willing to accept new standards and methods of accountability of their own performance in the classroom, including the controversial subject of merit pay;
- How teachers assess the role of the federal government in public education, in terms of both financial support and various proposals that have been suggested for giving financial credit to parents who do not wish their own children to be part of the public education process.

Q.2b

Table 1

WHETHER TEACHERS' OPINIONS HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY HEARD

Q.: Thinking about the current debate on education, would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that teachers' voices in general have been adequately heard?

NO. OF RESPONDENTS	TOTAL TEACHERS 1,981 %
STRONGLY AGREE	3
SOMEWHAT AGREE	24
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	36
STRONGLY DISAGREE	36
NOT SURE	1

In all, this survey is based on 1981 interviews, conducted by telephone among public school teachers on the elementary and secondary levels across the United States. It can be said that every public school teacher had an equal chance of being drawn into the final sample. The interviewing was conducted between March 21 and April 15, 1984. The detailed survey methodology, including information on the statistical reliability of the sample, is provided in Appendix A. Appendix B contains the survey questionnaire.

Notes on Reading the Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). Percentages may not always add to 100% because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

Public Release of the Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the Code of Standards for Survey Research of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls. Because data from this survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is also available, rather than simply an excerpt from the survey findings.

Project Responsibility

The director of this project at Louis Harris and Associates was Joshua D. Libresco, Vice President and Head of the Financial Services Division, under the overall supervision of Louis Harris, Chairman. Robert P. Parker, Research Director, assisted in the management of the project.

While Louis Harris and Associates gratefully acknowledges the contributions of many individuals, responsibility for the findings and for their interpretation rests soley with Louis Harris and Associates.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

The following are highlights of the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher. The reader, however, can study the results in greater detail by reading the actual tables of question-by-question results themselves.

A. Teachers in the United States are wide open for change in reforming public schools, including those changes which will undoubtedly require sacrifices and extra effort from the teachers themselves.

Far from resisting change, teachers want to be at the forefront of improvement in public education. They see real and positive results from a whole spate of proposed changes in the educational system, including curriculum, demands upon students, requirements for promotion and graduation of students, training and evaluation of teachers, and the ultimate accountability of teachers themselves.

1. By 92-7%, a nearly unanimous majority view broadening the curriculum to include such areas as computer literacy and foreign languages as having a positive effect. By 97-2%, an even higher majority see positive effects from emphasis on such basics as reading, writing, and math.

2. By 95-4%, teachers overwhelmingly believe it would be positive to give much higher priority to school discipline and safety. A comparable 91-8% see positive effects in tightening graduation requirements to include more academically stringent subjects. By 87-12%, teachers react favorably to establishing minimum competency tests for students at predetermined grade levels. By 74-24%, they would look with favor on increasing the amount of homework required for students at every level. By contrast, a 77-21% majority do not view positively extending the length of the school day, and a comparable 71-26% majority do not look with favor on extending the length of the school year. Basically, teachers believe reforms and improvements can take place within the current parameters of the school day and the school year.

3. Teachers are overwhelmingly receptive to measures which will improve the quality of those attracted to and made eligible for teaching. By 94-6%, they see positive effects in changes which would provide special incentives to encourage outstanding students to go into teaching in the first place. By 90-9%, they are highly positive about requiring new graduates to serve apprenticeships before certification. Even on the highly controversial suggestion that those who teach science and math and other subjects in which there are current shortages should receive higher salaries, 50% of teachers view such a change as positive.

However, teachers assert their sense of professionalism when they draw the line by opposing 61-37% the notion that school districts should hire talented people who are not certified teachers.

4. Contrary to the charges of many of their critics, teachers are highly positive about increasing their own accountability. By 87-12%, a big majority look with favor on the concept of career ladders to provide greater opportunities, more responsibility, and more pay as a way to attract and to keep better teachers in the system. By 84-14%, they also support changes which would make it easier for incompetent teachers to be removed. By 57-42%, they would welcome periodic retesting of teachers in their own subject areas. By 90-9%, a big majority of teachers in this country are willing to have their performance measured periodically by their current administrators, and a 72-27% majority are willing to have their performance evaluated by a committee of teachers in their own school. By 70-30%, they are in favor of standardized tests being employed to measure the improvement of their own students. And a 61-39% majority would support the use of standardized tests to measure the improvement of all the students in the school. By 60-39%, they are even willing to have their performance evaluated by standardized tests that measure teachers' skills. While they have reservations about merit pay as such, a 71-28% majority believe such a system could work if there were an objective standard on which a teacher's individual merit could be judged.

5. By 79-19%, a substantial majority of teachers are opposed to any cuts in federal funding and participation in education, with a clear majority of 55% who want increases above present levels. A lopsided 74-25% majority are opposed to giving tuition tax credits to families of children who do not attend public schools. And a 65-32% majority oppose a "voucher system," under which each family would receive a fixed amount for their child's education, irrespective of the type of school they send their children to.

B. Despite their willingness to see major changes in the educational system that affect their own professional lives, they feel beleaguered by lack of respect and lack of financial support.

1. By 52-47%, a majority of teachers nationwide do not feel respected in today's society. A comparable 53-45% majority would not advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching. One of the serious reservations teachers have about their professional role centers on financial concerns. A substantial 63-37% majority do not believe their job allows them to earn a decent salary. Compounding their troubles is the fact that by 72-26%, a majority feel they have to spend too much time on administrative tasks. A 57-42%

majority are convinced that the funds available for use by their own school are inadequate.

2. Another part of their own problem is reflected in their feeling that there is not full parental or community support for education. No more than 54% say such backing can be rated at least good, and this drops to 51% in the junior high schools and to 50% in the high schools. This contributes to teachers' feelings that they are isolated from the larger community in facing the problems in school.

3. Teachers do not hesitate to describe the professional problems that they feel beset them. A substantial 66-34% majority feel lack of student interest in their classes is a serious problem. Although 53% do not feel they are beset with overcrowded classes, 46% feel they are, with majorities in city schools and in the South and West reporting unacceptable overcrowding. While a 67-33% majority say drugs are not a serious problem in their school, the number worried about drugs rises to 46% in the junior high schools and to a 57% majority in the high schools. A 74-24% majority feel that drinking is not serious where they teach, but a 53-46% majority of high school teachers say it is. Although a 68-31% majority are convinced their school does not have a serious problem of getting enough qualified teachers, 43% of high school teachers believe this is a problem where they teach. A 59-40% majority say that lack of discipline is not a problem, but the number worried about discipline rises to 50% in city schools.

4. Teachers' evaluations of their own schools are more complex. On the surface, majorities give their own schools positive ratings on nearly every dimension. But, on a four-point scale of excellent-good-fair-poor, not a single school attribute approaches a majority who say that specific characteristic is excellent. While a 90-9% majority give a positive rating to the quality of teachers in their school, only 37% rate their colleagues excellent. Although an 81-19% majority rate the curriculum in general in their school positive, only 25% rate it excellent. Compared with a 79-21% majority who are positive on the academic standards in their school, no more than 26% say it is excellent. Although a 72-28% majority are positive on the policy in their school regarding students with special needs, no more than 31% say this policy is excellent. While a 68-31% majority are positive on the support of the administration in their school for the teachers, only 31% rate this support as excellent. Again, a 67-32% majority give passing marks to the disciplinary policy in their school, but only 22% say this policy is excellent. While by 64-35%, a majority are positive on the availability of teaching materials and supplies in their school, only 22% rate this excellent. A 63-37% majority give positive marks to their school's physical facilities, but only 24% say those facilities are excellent.

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5. This same gap between their overall assessment and the number who are willing to say they work under excellent conditions is evident in teachers' overall assessments of their own schools and their own job satisfaction. While a high 91-8% majority give a positive rating of their own school, only 42% say it is excellent—50% in elementary schools, 40% in junior high schools, and 31% in high schools. When asked how satisfied they are with their own jobs, by 81-18%, a majority say they are satisfied, but only 40% say they are very satisfied.

Observation: *It is evident that public school teachers in the United States feel they are underpaid, are burdened with too many administrative chores, are not given enough support from the parental and larger community, and work in an underfunded system. A slim majority would not recommend that other, younger people join their ranks. By their opposition to both tuition tax credits and voucher proposals, it is evident they feel beset by potential desertion of the public school system they are part of.*

If this were all the Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher had to report, then it would be a troubled, defensive group of teachers who now are teaching in the public schools. In addition, teachers' concerns about the system as a whole lead them to worry about lack of discipline, drinking and drug problems, difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers, lack of teacher interest in their work, overcrowded classes, lack of student interest in their classes, and inadequate financial support for the school—the picture is that of a harried, deeply disturbed American public school teacher.

But this portrait of teachers in the mid-1980's neither does the teachers justice nor accurately describes what they think or what they are prepared to do.

Teachers are a dedicated group of professionals who are wide open to participating in widespread change and reform within the school system. And, most important of all, they want to participate in effecting just such change.

They want the curriculum to be no-nonsense in terms of teaching basics, but at the same time want it to be broadened to include foreign languages and computer literacy courses. They want schools to be much tougher academically, with more challenging requirements for graduation, competency tests to determine grade level, and more homework for the students. And they want this done in an atmosphere that lays greater stress on school discipline and safety.

Teachers do not spare themselves from accountability and want an upgrading of their own ranks. They are nearly unanimous in their willingness to see an incentive system adopted under which outstanding students would be encouraged to go into teaching. They favor new graduates serving apprenticeships before receiving certification. They are basically not opposed to a higher level of salaries for science and math teachers to fill the current voids in those disciplines. The concept of career ladders with higher pay and opportunities but also more responsibilities appeals to them. They favor, not oppose, periodic retesting of themselves in their own subject areas. They strongly favor being rated by their administrators or by committees of their peers in the schools. They are unafraid of being judged by the results of standardized tests to measure the improvement of their own students.

This portrait of American teachers depicts a group of serious professionals. They are not wedded to the status quo. Teachers seek serious and responsible change and are willing to make personal sacrifices and take on more work themselves to make these changes successful.

Perhaps the portrait is best summed up in the almost unanimous 96-3% majority who say "I love to teach." They want to do their jobs and are seeking excellence. They are willing to take the risks that go with added

Observation: (continued)

responsibility and with tough checks on their own competence and their students' real, not claimed, learning experience.

A question that must be raised is whether the rest of the country—school administrators, parents, politicians, national leaders, and others—is willing to take up the challenge laid down by the teachers to meet new standards of excellence and accountability.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

A PROFILE OF TEACHERS IN THE UNITED STATES

More than two million individuals teach in American public schools on the elementary, junior high school, or high school level. Two-thirds (66%) of America's public school teachers are women, yet there is a great difference in representation of women by type of school–85% of the elementary school teachers, but only 38% of the high school teachers, are women (Table 2). The proportion of women in the working public is 44%.

The typical American teacher is almost 41 years of age, about five years older than the typical American worker (Table 3). Only 27% of teachers are under 35, and almost none are 65 or older. (This is not surprising, since teachers are public employees, and most are required to retire by the age of 65.) It is interesting to note that there is almost no difference in age by type of school.

American teachers have a median experience of almost fifteen years, about two years more than is true for the working public as a whole (Table 4). Almost half (48%) of all teachers have taught for at least fifteen years, and 27% have taught for twenty years or more. Consistent with this extensive experience, 81% of American public school teachers hold tenured positions (also in Table 4).

The typical American teacher is married and is more likely to be married than is the average American worker (Table 5). Seventy-four percent of teachers are married; the comparable figure for the working public is 64%.

Seventy-four percent of all teachers have children (also in Table 5), and this is significantly higher than the comparable figure for the working public (51%). Half of the teachers have school-age children, and the vast majority of them have children in public schools.

Three-fourths of America's public school teachers are members of unions, and there is no difference in union membership by type of school (Table 6). Teachers' union membership is highest in the East (93%) and lowest in the South (54%).

Observation: *No specific unions were mentioned by name as part of the question wording. Because the question was asked broadly, teachers could have been thinking of a number of different organizations when responding to this question.*

America's teachers are a hard-working group. According to Table 7, teachers work a median of almost 50 hours a week on their school-related responsibilities, and 28% of the teachers report weekly investments of more than 55 hours. High school teachers work slightly more hours than do teachers at the elementary school level.

The household income of the average teacher is comparable to that of college graduates in general (Table 8). Both groups have a median household income of about $30,000.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

Observation: *It should be remembered that teachers are somewhat older than the working public in general, that teachers have more work experience, and that teachers are more likely to be married (hence, more likely to have two-income families.) All of these factors suggest that the average teacher is less well paid than the average college graduate. Only 1 in 4 teachers (26%) claim to have another job—including summer jobs—outside of the school system. This could reflect an overall satisfaction with current income levels. On the other hand, the fact that teachers work more hours than do other workers during the school year leaves less time for nonschool employment.*

Table 2
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY SEX

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			TOTAL WORKING PUBLIC**
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	491	
	%	%	%	%	%
MALE	34	15	42	62	56
FEMALE	66	85	58	38	44

**U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1984 edition.

Q.F9

Table 3
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY AGE

Q.: How old are you?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			TOTAL WORKING PUBLIC**
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	[illegible]	1,237
	%	%	%	%	%
18-24 YEARS	1	2	1	1	17
25-34 YEARS	26	27	26	25	31
35-49 YEARS	49	47	48	51	30
50-64 YEARS	23	23	26	22	20
65 AND OVER	1	1	1	*	1
MEDIAN YEARS	**40.5**	**40.5**	**39.5**	**41.7**	**36.7**

*Less than 0.5%.
***Employee Attitudes*, 1980. A survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

Q.F4, F5

Table 4

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY YEARS TAUGHT AND BY WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE TENURE

Q.: Regardless of the types of schools you've taught in, for about how many years, in total, have you worked as a teacher?

Q.: Do you have a tenured teaching position?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			TOTAL WORKING PUBLIC**
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	491	1,237
	%	%	%	%	%
YEARS TAUGHT					
LESS THAN 5	8	7	9	8	16
5 TO 9	19	20	15	17	24
10 TO 14	25	25	28	23	16
15 TO 19	21	23	18	20	13
20 OR MORE	27	25	29	31	31
MEDIAN YEARS	**14.7**	**14.6**	**14.6**	**15.5**	**12.5**
TENURE					
HAVE TENURE	81	82	82	76	x
DO NOT HAVE TENURE	19	17	17	23	x

**_Employee Attitudes_, 1980. A survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates. Total years worked full-time. The following categories were used in that survey: Less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21 years or more.

x = Not applicable.

Q.F10, F11, F12

Table 5

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY MARITAL STATUS AND BY WHETHER OR NOT THEY HAVE CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Q.: Are you single, married, divorced, widowed, or separated?

Q.: Do you have any children?

Q.: Do your children attend public schools, private schools, or parochial schools?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			TOTAL WORKING PUBLIC**
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	491	1,237
	%	%	%	%	%
MARITAL STATUS					
SINGLE	14	16	11	11	21
MARRIED	74	70	77	79	64
OTHER	12	14	12	9	15
CHILDREN IN SCHOOL					
HAVE CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOL	43	40	43	48	x
HAVE CHILDREN IN PRIVATE/PAROCHIAL SCHOOL	7	7	9	8	x
CHILDREN NOT OLD ENOUGH/TOO OLD FOR SCHOOL	25	27	24	24	x
DO NOT HAVE CHILDREN	26	28	24	23	49

**U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1984 edition.

x = Data not available.

Table 6

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY UNION MEMBERSHIP

Q.: Are you a member of a teachers' union?

		TYPE OF SCHOOL			REGION			
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	EAST	MID-WEST	SOUTH	WEST
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %
YES, MEMBER	75	76	76	76	93	81	54	79
NO, NOT A MEMBER	24	24	24	24	7	19	46	20
NOT SURE	*	*	–	–	–	–	*	–

*Less than 0.5%

Table 7

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY HOURS WORKED

Q.: In an average week, how many hours do you spend, in total, on school-related responsibilities–including all responsibilities in the classroom, any responsibilities outside the classroom, and any work you do at home?

		TYPE OF SCHOOL		
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	491
	%	%	%	%
30 HOURS OR LESS	4	5	2	6
31 TO 40 HOURS	11	11	11	11
41 TO 45 HOURS	17	19	15	15
46 TO 55 HOURS	40	40	43	40
MORE THAN 55 HOURS	28	25	28	30
MEDIAN HOURS	**49.3**	**48.8**	**49.5**	**50.0**

Q.F15

Table 8

DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHERS BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Q.: Which of the following income categories best describes your total 1983 *household* income from all sources, before taxes? Was it (READ LIST)?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			TOTAL COLLEGE GRADUATES**
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	491	
	%	%	%	%	%
$15,000 OR LESS	4	4	3	3	16
$15,001 - $20,000	15	17	13	12	11
$20,001 - $30,000	30	29	27	36	
$30,001 - $40,000	23	23	26	21	53
$40,001 - $50,000	14	13	16	13	
$50,001 AND OVER	13	13	15	12	20
NOT SURE	1	1	1	2	–
MEDIAN INCOME (in thousands of dollars)	**$30.0**	**$29.8**	**$32.6**	**$29.4**	**$30.6**

**U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1984 edition. Household income of college graduates.

IV.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

THE JOB SATISFACTION OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER

Overall Job Satisfaction

The vast majority of American teachers are satisfied with their jobs, although teachers are less satisfied with their jobs than are working people in general–81% of teachers are at least somewhat satisfied with their jobs, and 40% are very satisfied; the comparable figures for the working public are 87% and 52% (Table 9).

There are only minor differences in satisfaction by type of school, but there are no differences by region, by years of experience, and by most other variables. However, teachers in city schools are less satisfied with their jobs overall than are teachers in suburban or rural schools.

Specific Aspects of Job Satisfaction

Whatever else teachers might say about their jobs, public school teachers love to teach (Table 10). The teachers were asked to agree or disagree with seven specific statements about their jobs and 96% agree with the "I love to teach" statement. In fact, 78% agree strongly.

Moreover, by 70-29% teachers agree that they are "usually recognized for good performance."

Yet the other statements tested lead to negative evaluations. By 72-26%, teachers agree that they "have to spend too much time on administrative tasks." By 50-46%, teachers do not agree that "the training and preparation teachers receive today does a good job preparing them for the classroom." By 52-47%, teachers do not agree that they "feel respected in today's society," and by 63-37%, they disagree that their jobs "allow (them) the opportunity to earn a decent salary."

Observation:

Love of teaching is a powerful inducement to America's teachers and is probably the dominant feeling that keeps them in their jobs. It is clear that the frustrations are many. Perhaps most telling, by 53-45%, a majority of teachers disagree that they "would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching."

Teachers feel "recognized for good performance" within their schools, yet they do not feel "respected in today's society" outside of their schools.

Tables 11 and 12 show levels of agreement with these same seven statements for key subgroups of teachers. Teachers with more experience are less satisfied with their administrative burdens than are beginning teachers and are less likely to recommend a career in teaching to a young person. Male teachers are more critical than female teachers on many items. Teachers in city schools are less likely than are rural teachers to feel that they are respected and that the training and preparation teachers receive prepare them for the classroom. City teachers are also less likely to recommend a career in teaching to a young person.

Q.2a

Table 9

TEACHERS' OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

Q.: All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job as a teacher in the public schools–very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			SIZE OF PLACE			TOTAL WORKING PUBLIC**
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	CITY	SUBURB	RURAL	
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	551 %	869 %	561 %	1,237 %
VERY SATISFIED	40	43	39	38	35	42	42	52
SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	41	40	44	42	44	38	44	35
SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	16	15	14	18	18	18	13	10
VERY DISSATISFIED	2	1	3	3	4	2	1	3
NOT SURE	*	–	1	–	–	–	*	*

*Less than 0.5%.
**_Employee Attitudes_, 1980. A survey conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

Table 10

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF JOB SATISFACTION

Q.: I would like to read you some statements people have made about their jobs. For each, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the statement in terms of *your* own job as a teacher in the public schools.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE STRONGLY	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
I LOVE TO TEACH	78	18	3	*	*
I HAVE TO SPEND TO MUCH TIME ON ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS	38	34	19	7	*
I AM USUALLY RECOGNIZED FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE	33	37	19	10	*
I WOULD ADVISE A YOUNG PERSON TO PURSUE A CAREER IN TEACHING	12	33	29	24	1
AS A TEACHER, I FEEL RESPECTED IN TODAY'S SOCIETY	10	37	31	21	*
THE TRAINING AND PREPARATION TEACHERS RECEIVE TODAY DOES A GOOD JOB PREPARING THEM FOR THE CLASSROOM	10	36	31	19	3
MY JOB ALLOWS ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A DECENT SALARY	8	29	26	37	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 11

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF JOB SATISFACTION: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY SEX

Q.: I would like to read you some statements people have made about their jobs. For each, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the statement in terms of *your* own job as a teacher in the public schools.

	"AGREE STRONGLY" OR "AGREE SOMEWHAT"								
		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	685 %	1,296 %
I love to teach	97	97	96	97	98	96	96	95	97
I have to spend too much time on administrative tasks	73	75	70	71	65	68	75	70	74
I am usually recognized for good performance	70	72	74	64	72	64	71	64	73
As a teacher, I feel respected in today's society	47	48	41	49	49	46	47	45	48
The training and preparation teachers receive today does a good job preparing them for the classroom	46	47	40	48	58	39	47	42	48
I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching	45	46	45	46	63	48	43	42	47
My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary	37	39	35	33	31	31	39	34	39

Q.2c

Table 12

TEACHER'S ATTITUDES TOWARD SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF JOB SATISFACTION: BY REGION AND BY SIZE OF PLACE

Q.: I would like to read you some statements people have made about their jobs. For each, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the statement in terms of *your* own job as a teacher in the public schools.

	"AGREE STRONGLY" OR "AGREE SOMEWHAT"							
	TOTAL TEACHERS	REGION				SIZE OF PLACE		
		EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	CITY	SUBURB	RURAL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %	551 %	869 %	561 %
I love to teach	97	94	97	97	99	96	97	97
I have to spend too much time on administrative tasks	73	73	66	77	77	75	74	70
I am usually recognized for good performance	70	68	70	73	67	68	69	72
As a teacher, I feel respected in today's society	47	37	50	52	47	39	47	52
The training and preparation teachers receive today does a good job preparing them for the classroom	46	42	50	51	38	43	44	51
I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching	45	39	45	46	56	39	46	50
My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary	37	40	42	29	40	38	39	35

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TEACHERS' RATINGS OF THEIR OWN SCHOOLS

Overall Ratings

Most teachers rate their schools highly. Nine out of ten teachers (91%) say the quality of education in their schools is either excellent or good, and 42% say the quality of education is excellent (Table13). Only 7% rate the quality of education fair, and 1% say it is poor.

High school teachers, teachers with less experience, and male teachers are significantly less likely to say the quality of education in their schools is excellent than are elementary and junior high school teachers, teachers with more experience, and female teachers, respectively.

Ratings on Specific Educational Issues

After rating their schools in general, public school teachers were asked to provide specific ratings on eleven issues related to teaching in their schools. These ratings are presented in Table 14.

While 42% of the teachers rate the quality of education in their schools excellent (in Table 13), none of the specific items evaluated is rated excellent by as many as 4 teachers in 10. The teachers give their highest ratings to themselves–90% say the quality of teachers is at least good, and 37% say the quality of teachers in their schools is excellent.

Issues related to school policies and students receive the next highest ratings: the curriculum in general (81% rate this good or better), the school's academic standards (79% good or better), and the policy of the school regarding students with special needs (72% good or better). In addition, 68% of the teachers say the support they receive from the school administration is at least good, and 67% say the same about the school's disciplinary policy.

Issues related to financial support are an obvious sore point: the availability of teaching materials and supplies, the school's physical facilities, and the number of students per class are each rated excellent by fewer than 1 teacher in 4, although a majority of the teachers rate each of these items at least good. The funds available for use in the school are rated fair or poor by a majority of the teachers surveyed, and parental and community support (which is not strictly a financial issue) is criticized almost as severely.

Observation:

Teachers' ratings of their schools are in marked contrast to the ratings provided by the public in general and by parents, specifically. In the ***Fifteenth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*** *(conducted by the Gallup Organization for Phi Delta Kappa in 1983), parents used a similar list and rated physical facilities highest. The quality of teaching was rated fifth.*

Tables 15 and 16 show the "excellent" or "good" responses to these issues for key subgroups of teachers. Teachers with less experience, male teachers, high school teachers, and city teachers tend to be more critical on most issues.

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Observation: *One expects to see differences between city schools and schools in other places, and there are differences on most items. However, it is interesting to note that city teachers do not rate their schools more critically on physical facilities or on parental and community support.*

Q.1

Table 13

TEACHERS' OVERALL RATINGS OF THEIR SCHOOLS

Q.: As you know, there has been much discussion recently about American education and especially about our primary and secondary public schools. Thinking about the public school in which you teach, how would you rate the quality of education in your school–excellent, good, fair, or poor?

		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	685 %	1,296 %
EXCELLENT	42	50	40	31	33	39	44	33	47
GOOD	49	44	51	57	56	51	48	55	46
FAIR	7	5	8	10	7	9	7	10	6
POOR	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1

Q.3

Table 14

TEACHERS' RATINGS OF THEIR SCHOOLS ON SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Q.: Now I would like you to evaluate some more specific things about the public school at which you teach. I am going to read several criteria on which public schools can be judged. For each, please tell me whether you would rate *your* school excellent, good, fair or poor on that criterion.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
THE QUALITY OF TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL	37	53	9	*	*
THE POLICY OF YOUR SCHOOL REGARDING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	31	41	21	7	*
THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION IN YOUR SCHOOL FOR THE TEACHERS	31	37	22	9	*
ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN YOUR SCHOOL	26	53	18	3	*
THE CURRICULUM IN GENERAL	25	56	17	2	–
THE SCHOOL'S PHYSICAL FACILITIES	24	39	26	11	–
THE AVAILABILITY OF TEACHING MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES	22	42	27	8	*
THE DISCIPLINARY POLICY OF YOUR SCHOOL	22	45	23	9	–
THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN YOUR CLASSES	19	41	27	12	*
PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL	16	38	30	15	–
FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR USE BY YOUR SCHOOL	10	32	37	20	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 15

TEACHERS' RATINGS OF THEIR SCHOOLS ON SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL ISSUES: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY SEX

Q.: Now I would like you to evaluate some more specific things about the public school at which you teach. I am going to read several criteria on which public schools can be judged. For each, please tell me whether you would rate *your* school excellent, good, fair, or poor on that criterion.

	"EXCELLENT" OR "GOOD"								
		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	685 %	1,296 %
The quality of teachers in your school	90	92	89	87	89	90	90	87	91
The curriculum in general	81	83	80	78	73	83	81	75	83
Academic standards in your school	78	83	76	72	70	79	79	72	81
The policy of your school regarding students with special needs	72	73	75	69	64	74	73	71	73
The support of the administration in your school for the teachers	68	70	68	68	65	67	68	64	70
The disciplinary policy of your school	67	69	66	66	60	71	67	61	70
The availability of teaching materials and supplies	65	66	64	65	58	67	64	63	65
The school's physical facilities	63	64	61	64	54	64	64	62	63
The number of students in your classes	61	59	55	70	67	55	61	62	60
Parental and community support for the school	55	59	51	50	47	56	55	50	57
Funds available for use by your school	42	44	41	41	44	43	41	38	44

Q.3

Table 16

TEACHERS' RATINGS OF THEIR SCHOOLS ON SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL ISSUES: BY REGION AND BY SIZE OF PLACE

Q.: Now I would like you to evaluate some more specific things about the public school at which you teach. I am going to read several criteria on which public schools can be judged. For each, please tell me whether you would rate *your* school excellent, good, fair, or poor on that criterion.

	"EXCELLENT" OR "GOOD"							
	TOTAL TEACHERS	REGION				SIZE OF PLACE		
		EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	CITY	SUBURB	RURAL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %	551 %	869 %	561 %
The quality of teachers in your school	90	91	90	90	89	85	91	92
The curriculum in general	81	81	80	81	79	79	81	81
Academic standards in your school	78	77	81	78	76	73	80	79
The policy of your school regarding students with special needs	72	73	75	71	69	67	74	74
The support of the administration in your school for the teachers	68	62	69	75	63	68	65	72
The disciplinary policy of your school	67	62	72	69	66	62	69	69
The availability of teaching materials and supplies	65	61	69	67	57	57	63	71
The school's physical facilities	63	67	68	62	52	64	64	61
The number of students in your classes	61	59	69	59	53	55	56	70
Parental and community support for the school	55	51	59	52	59	53	55	55
Funds available for use by your school	42	43	42	43	35	36	41	46

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TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN THE SCHOOLS

A great deal has been written about the various problems confronting the schools, and the views of the public and of political and educational leaders have been heard repeatedly. In this chapter, public school teachers provide their own perspectives on the seriousness of problems in the schools.

As Table 17 indicates, inadequate financial support for the school and students' lack of interest in their classes are seen by teachers as the most serious problems. Each of these problems is believed to be at least somewhat serious by almost two-thirds of the teachers surveyed, and 1 in 5 say each is a very serious problem.

Overcrowded classes are the next most serious problem (46% say this is at least somewhat serious), followed by lack of discipline (40%), drugs (33%), difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers (31%), and teachers' lack of interest in their work (31%). One in four teachers (24%) say drinking is at least a somewhat serious problem.

Observation: *The 1983 Gallup survey of parents found a completely different ordering of problems. Parents believed lack of discipline and drugs are the most serious problems, perhaps because these problems (along with drinking) can have the most personal impact. The teachers' focus is on problems that may be less visible but more insidious.*

If we look only at the "very serious" responses, teachers in the West are more concerned about inadequate financial support, overcrowded classes, and difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers than are teachers in other regions (Table 18). Teachers in cities are more concerned about difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers and lack of discipline. Other problems do not seem to be more serious in the city schools.

High school teachers are more likely than are teachers at lower levels to be concerned about students' lack of interest in their classes, difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers, drugs, and drinking. Elementary school teachers are somewhat more concerned about overcrowding.

Observation: *While focusing on the "very serious" responses can be an appealing way to evaluate which problems appear most immediate, the "somewhat serious" responses can be dramatic. Fifty-seven percent of the high school teachers* ***and 46% of the junior high school teachers*** *say drugs are at least a somewhat serious problem in their schools. Perhaps most ominously, 15% of the elementary school teachers say the problem of drugs is at least somewhat serious.*

Table 17

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN THEIR OWN SCHOOLS

Q.: Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious in the public school in which you teach.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT VERY SERIOUS	NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
INADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL	21	42	27	10	*
STUDENTS' LACK OF INTEREST IN THEIR CLASSES	19	47	27	7	*
OVERCROWDED CLASSES	14	32	30	23	-
LACK OF DISCIPLINE	8	32	37	22	-
DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING ENOUGH QUALIFIED TEACHERS	8	23	33	35	*
DRUGS	6	27	33	34	*
ELEMENTARY	2	13	29	55	*
JUNIOR HIGH	7	39	39	16	-
HIGH SCHOOL	12	45	36	6	-
DRINKING	5	19	23	51	1
ELEMENTARY	2	6	17	74	1
JUNIOR HIGH	4	23	35	36	1
HIGH SCHOOL	13	40	28	18	*
TEACHERS' LACK OF INTEREST IN THEIR WORK	4	27	39	29	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.4

Table 18

TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE SERIOUSNESS OF PROBLEMS IN THEIR OWN SCHOOLS: BY REGION, BY SIZE OF PLACE, AND BY TYPE OF SCHOOL

Q.: Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious in the public school in which you teach.

	"VERY SERIOUS"										
		REGION				SIZE OF PLACE			TYPE OF SCHOOL		
	TOTAL TEACHERS	EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	CITY	SUBURB	RURAL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %	551 %	869 %	561 %	972 %	375 %	491 %
Inadequate financial support for the school	21	17	22	19	30	21	21	22	19	21	23
Students' lack of interest in their classes	19	15	17	24	16	23	15	21	13	23	25
Overcrowded classes	14	12	10	15	23	16	15	12	17	14	11
Difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers	8	10	4	7	15	11	9	5	5	9	14
Lack of discipline	8	10	8	8	9	15	7	5	7	10	9
Drugs	6	5	6	5	7	5	6	7	2	7	12
Drinking	5	3	8	3	10	3	5	7	2	4	13
Teachers' lack of interest in their work	4	5	2	6	5	6	4	3	4	7	4

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

TEACHERS' REACTIONS TO VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SCHOOLS

Suggestions To Improve the Quality of Education

Of the most important reforms currently proposed for the American education system, overwhelming majorities of teachers believe that many would have a positive effect. Table 19 presents teachers' views on eight suggestions. Most popular are an emphasis on basic skills, an emphasis on school safety and discipline, and a tightening of graduation requirements. Least popular are extensions of the school day or the school year.

Observation: *This is the first of several dramatic indications that teachers are willing to take an active role in the process of improving America's schools. Teachers consistently show a willingness to see a change in the system, as necessary, even if these changes might require sacrifices from the teachers themselves.*

Three suggestions would be expected to have a positive effect by over 90% of the teachers, with at least 50% believing each would have a strongly positive effect: emphasizing basic skills such as reading, writing, and math (97% expect a positive effect); emphasizing school discipline and safety (95%); and tightening graduation requirements to include more academically stringent subjects (91%).

Approximately the same percentages of teachers would expect positive effects from broadening the school curriculum to include such things as computer literacy and foreign languages (92% positive) and establishing minimum competency tests at predetermined grade levels (87%). Three-fourths of the teachers (74%) believe increasing the amount of homework required would have a positive effect, although only 18% believe the effect of this change would be strongly positive.

Observation: *Increasing the amount of homework and, to a lesser extent, tightening graduation requirements and establishing minimum competency tests would probably mean more work for teachers. Yet teachers see these as positive developments.*

Only two suggestions fail to meet with majority support. Extending the length of the school year is expected to have a negative effect on balance (by 71-26%), and extending the length of the school day is criticized even more vehemently (by 77-21%).

Tables 20 and 21 show how important subgroups of teachers react to these suggestions. High school teachers are more interested than are teachers at lower levels in increasing the amount of homework, even though the workloads of high school teachers would probably be most affected by such a change. By region, teachers in the West show the greatest

interest in extending the school year and the school day. City teachers are more likely than are suburban or rural teachers to favor more homework, a longer school year, a longer school day, and minimum competency tests.

Suggestions To Improve the Quality of Teaching

The eight suggestions in Table 22 have all been offered as ways of improving the quality of teaching in the public schools. Most would have profound effects on public school teachers. Even so, majorities of the teachers believe six of the eight suggestions would have a positive effect on the quality of teaching in America's public schools.

By 94-6% teachers believe providing special incentives to encourage outstanding students to go into teaching would have a positive effect on the profession, and teachers are similarly supportive (by 90-9%) of requiring new graduates to serve apprenticeships before they are certified as teachers. Vast majorities of teachers also expect a positive effect from establishing career ladders to provide greater opportunities for teachers (by 87-12%), making it easier for incompetent teachers to be removed (by 84-14%), and requiring competency tests before certification (by 82-17%). A majority of the teachers would also see benefit in requiring periodic retesting of teachers in their subject matter (by 57-42%), and by 50-49%, teachers are divided on the benefit of setting higher salaries for teachers of math, science, and other areas in which there are teacher shortages.

Observation: *It is interesting that such a high proportion of teachers favor each of these suggestions. The popular wisdom suggests that teachers are skeptical about most of these suggestions: career ladders, for fear that the best teachers would not always be recognized; removal of incompetent teachers, again for fear that the evaluation system might not be fair; retesting of teachers, for the same reason (and for reasons related to professional pride); and math/science salary bonuses, for fear that these would undermine the collective bargaining process. In fact, the data suggest that large proportions of the teachers would consider each of these reforms. The teachers seem willing to put the interest of quality education above their own self-interest.*

Teachers view the proposal to allow school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers as likely to have a negative effect on the quality of teaching (by 61-37%).

Teachers at the high school level and teachers with fewer years of experience seem more interested in several of the suggestions than do other teachers (Table 23 and 24). Yet, more dramatic is the fact that majorities of teachers in every subgroup support each of the first six proposals (and opinion is divided fairly evenly in each group on the seventh).

Q.5a

Table 19

WHETHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON EDUCATION IN GENERAL

Q.: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of education. Based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on education in general.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	STRONGLY POSITIVE	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE	STRONGLY NEGATIVE	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
EMPHASIZE BASIC SKILLS, SUCH AS READING, WRITING, AND MATH	74	23	2	*	*
EMPHASIZE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND SAFETY	60	35	3	1	*
TIGHTEN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE MORE ACADEMICALLY STRINGENT SUBJECTS	50	41	7	1	*
BROADEN THE CURRICULUM TO INCLUDE SUCH THINGS AS COMPUTER LITERACY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES	49	43	6	1	*
ESTABLISH MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTS FOR STUDENTS AT PREDETERMINED GRADE LEVELS	42	45	9	3	1
INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF HOMEWORK REQUIRED OF STUDENTS	18	56	20	4	2
EXTEND THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY	4	17	40	37	1
EXTEND THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL YEAR	4	22	37	34	3

*Less than 0.5%.

Table 20

WHETHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON EDUCATION IN GENERAL: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY SEX

Q.: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of education. Based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on education in general.

"STRONGLY POSITIVE EFFECT" OR "SOMEWHAT POSITIVE EFFECT"

		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	972	375	491	142	326	1,513	685	1,296
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Emphasize basic skills, such as reading, writing, and math	97	97	97	95	96	96	97	97	97
Emphasize school discipline and safety	95	95	95	95	96	95	95	94	96
Broaden the curriculum to include such things as computer literacy and foreign languages	92	89	96	93	93	93	92	93	92
Tighten graduation requirements to include more academically stringent subjects	91	92	92	90	91	90	91	91	92
Establish minimum competency tests for students at predetermined grade levels	87	85	90	88	93	84	87	90	86
Increase the amount of homework required of students	73	68	77	80	72	70	74	79	70
Extend the length of the school year	27	27	28	28	26	29	26	32	24
Extend the length of the school day	21	20	20	25	20	17	22	24	20

Q.5a

Table 21

WHETHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON EDUCATION IN GENERAL: BY REGION AND BY SIZE OF PLACE

Q.: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of education. Based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on education in general.

	"STRONGLY POSITIVE EFFECT" OR "SOMEWHAT POSITIVE EFFECT"							
	TOTAL TEACHERS	REGION				SIZE OF PLACE		
		EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	CITY	SUBURB	RURAL
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %	551 %	869 %	561 %
Emphasize basic skills, such as reading, writing, and math	97	97	98	97	92	96	96	98
Emphasize school discipline and safety	95	96	96	96	92	94	95	96
Broaden the curriculum to include such things as computer literacy and foreign languages	92	94	93	92	88	92	91	93
Tighten graduation requirements to include more academically stringent subjects	91	92	91	92	90	93	91	91
Establish minimum competency tests for students at predetermined grade levels	87	88	85	88	88	91	88	84
Increase the amount of homework required of students	73	75	78	69	70	78	73	70
Extend the length of the school year	27	22	25	24	42	32	28	22
Extend the length of the school day	21	19	20	17	36	27	22	16

Table 22

WHETHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

Q.: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of *teaching* in America's public schools. Again, based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on education in general.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	STRONGLY POSITIVE %	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE %	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE %	STRONGLY NEGATIVE %	NOT SURE %
REQUIRE NEW GRADUATES TO SERVE APPRENTICESHIPS BEFORE THEY ARE CERTIFIED AS TEACHERS	53	37	6	3	1
MAKE IT EASIER FOR INCOMPETENT TEACHERS TO BE REMOVED	52	32	10	4	1
PROVIDE SPECIAL INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE OUTSTANDING STUDENTS TO GO INTO TEACHING	51	43	5	1	*
ESTABLISH CAREER LADDERS THAT PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH GREATER OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE ON MORE RESPONSIBILITY AND PAY	50	37	8	4	1
REQUIRE TEACHERS TO TAKE COMPETENCY TESTS BEFORE CERTIFICATION	42	40	11	6	1
SET HIGHER SALARIES FOR TEACHERS WHO TEACH IN SCIENCE AND MATH OR OTHER AREAS IN WHICH THERE ARE TEACHER SHORTAGES	21	29	26	23	1
REQUIRE PERIODIC RETESTING OF TEACHERS IN THEIR SUBJECT MATTER	15	42	25	17	*
ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO HIRE TALENTED PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT CERTIFIED TEACHERS	9	28	29	32	1

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.5b

Table 23

WHETHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY SEX

Q.: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of *teaching* in America's public schools. Again, based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on the quality of teaching in America's public schools.

	"STRONGLY POSITIVE EFFECT" OR "SOMEWHAT POSITIVE EFFECT"								
		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	685 %	1,296 %
Provide special incentive to encourage outstanding students to go into teaching	93	93	95	93	95	92	93	94	93
Require new graduates to serve apprenticeships before they are certified as teachers	90	90	93	88	86	87	91	88	91
Establish career ladders that provide teachers with greater opportunities to take on more responsibility and pay	87	84	88	91	93	87	86	88	86
Make it easier for incompetent teachers to be removed	85	84	85	85	90	87	84	86	84
Require teachers to take competency tests before certification	82	79	86	84	90	79	82	85	80
Require periodic retesting of teachers in their subject matter	57	54	59	61	72	61	54	59	55
Set higher salaries for teachers who teach in science and math or other areas in which there are teacher shortages	50	53	48	48	65	51	48	51	50
Allow school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers	38	36	41	38	38	40	37	41	36

SP

Q.5b

Table 24

WHETHER SUGGESTED CHANGES WILL HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING: BY REGION AND BY SIZE OF PLACE

Q... Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of *teaching* in America's public schools. Again, based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on the quality of teaching in America's public schools.

	"STRONGLY POSITIVE EFFECT" OR "SOMEWHAT POSITIVE EFFECT"							
	TOTAL TEACHERS	REGION				SIZE OF PLACE		
		EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	CITY	SUBURB	RURAL
NO OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %	551 %	869 %	561 %
Provide special incentives to encourage outstanding students to go into teaching	93	92	94	94	93	92	93	94
Require new graduates to serve apprenticeships before they are certified as teachers	90	90	89	90	91	89	91	90
Establish career ladders that provide teachers with greater opportunities to take on more responsibility and pay	87	90	89	83	83	86	89	84
Make it easier for incompetent teachers to be removed	85	83	85	86	85	82	86	85
Require teachers to take competency tests before certification	82	80	85	82	80	84	80	84
Require periodic retesting of teachers in their subject matter	57	55	61	53	58	55	56	59
Set higher salaries for teachers who teach in science and math or other areas in which there are teacher shortages	50	50	44	57	47	50	50	50
Allow school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers	38	41	34	36	42	39	38	36

VIII.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD MERIT PAY AND VARIOUS MEASURES OF THEIR PERFORMANCE

Attitudes Toward Merit Pay

Public school teachers have mixed views about merit pay (Table 25). By 71-28% they agree that "merit pay could work if a teacher's merit can be judged on an objective standard." However, while opinion is divided as to whether "merit pay would help make teachers' salaries more comparable with salaries in other professions" (49% agree, 50% disagree), by 59-39% teachers disagree that "merit pay is an effective way of attracting and retaining good teachers in the profession."

Merit pay in all its aspects is most likely to be favored by teachers with less experience and by male teachers (Table 26).

Observation:

To some extent the words "merit pay" arouse more disagreement than the concept. In addition, merit pay is being debated fiercely in almost thirty statehouses (and almost thirty different proposals are being considered). In Table 22 teachers agreed (by 87-12%) with the idea of establishing career ladders that could lead to more responsibility and more pay. Merit pay could have similar implications, but the words themselves generate great controversy.

Attitudes Toward Various Measures of Performance

One of the most dramatic tables in this report shows that teachers would be willing to be measured by any of the methods tested (Table 27). Nine teachers in ten would be willing to be evaluated by their administrators; presumably, this is also the most common current method of evaluation. Majorities of the teachers would also be willing to be measured by a committee of teachers (by 72-27%), by standardized tests charting the improvement of their own students (by 70-30%), by standardized tests charting the improvement of students throughout their school (by 61-39%), and by standardized tests that measure teachers' skills (by 60-39%).

Teachers with less experience are more willing than are more experienced teachers to consider evaluation by a committee of teachers, by standardized tests of their own students or of students throughout their school, or by standardized tests that measure teachers' skills (Table 28). Male teachers are more willing than female teachers to consider four of the five evaluation methods. Yet the most important finding in Table 28 is that majorities in every subgroup would be willing to be measured by each of the five methods.

Observation:

These findings reinforce the data in the previous chapter. Teachers are so willing to consider improvements in the public school system that they would even be willing to consider changes in the evaluation of their own performance. Teachers agree that they themselves must be evaluated more carefully if the system is to be improved.

Q.6

Table 25

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD MERIT PAY

Q. For each of the following statements about merit pay, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE STRONGLY	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
MERIT PAY COULD WORK IF A TEACHER'S MERIT CAN BE JUDGED ON AN OBJECTIVE STANDARD	34	37	12	16	1
MERIT PAY WOULD HELP MAKE TEACHERS' SALARIES MORE COMPARABLE WITH SALARIES IN OTHER PROFESSIONS	18	31	20	30	2
MERIT PAY IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF ATTRACTING AND RETAINING GOOD TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION	14	25	21	38	1

Table 26

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD MERIT PAY: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY SEX

Q.: For each of the following statements about merit pay, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

	"AGREE STRONGLY" OR "AGREE SOMEWHAT"								
		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMEN-TARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	685 %	1,296 %
MERIT PAY COULD WORK IF A TEACHER'S MERIT CAN BE JUDGED ON AN OBJECTIVE STANDARD	71	70	73	74	79	75	69	73	70
MERIT PAY WOULD HELP MAKE TEACHERS' SALARIES MORE COMPARABLE WITH SALARIES IN OTHER PROFESSIONS	49	49	46	53	60	57	46	50	48
MERIT PAY IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF ATTRACTING AND RETAINING GOOD TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION	40	37	40	46	51	43	38	43	38

Table 27

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD VARIOUS MEASURES OF THEIR PERFORMANCE

Q.: Several ways have been suggested to periodically measure teacher performance. For each one I read, please tell me, regardless of whether or not you are currently evaluated in that way, if you yourself would be very willing, somewhat willing, not very willing, or not willing at all to be measured on that basis.

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	VERY WILLING	SOMEWHAT WILLING	NOT VERY WILLING	NOT WILLING AT ALL	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
AN EVALUATION OF YOUR OVERALL PERFORMANCE BY YOUR ADMINISTRATOR	59	31	5	4	*
AN EVALUATION OF YOUR OVERALL PERFORMANCE BY A COMMITTEE OF TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL, CHOSEN BY FELLOW TEACHERS	37	35	14	13	*
STANDARDIZED TESTS THAT MEASURE THE IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS OF THE STUDENTS *IN YOUR CLASSES*	29	41	15	15	*
STANDARDIZED TESTS THAT MEASURE THE IMPROVEMENT IN SKILLS OF THE STUDENTS *IN YOUR ENTIRE SCHOOL* COMPARED TO OTHER SCHOOLS IN YOUR STATE	26	35	19	20	*
STANDARDIZED TESTS THAT MEASURE TEACHERS' SKILLS	19	41	20	19	*

*Less than 0.5%.

Q.7

Table 28

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD VARIOUS MEASURES OF THEIR PERFORMANCE: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY SEX

Q.: Several ways have been suggested to periodically measure teacher performance. For each one I read, please tell me, regardless of whether or not you are currently evaluated in that way, if you yourself would be very willing, somewhat willing, not very willing, or not willing at all to be measured on that basis.

	"VERY WILLING" OR "SOMEWHAT WILLING"								
		TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			SEX	
	TOTAL TEACHERS	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	MALE	FEMALE
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	685 %	1,296 %
An evaluation of your overall performance by your administrator	91	92	91	87	90	94	90	86	94
An evaluation of your overall performance by a committee of teachers in your school, chosen by fellow teachers	72	68	79	75	78	72	72	75	71
Standardized tests that measure the improvement in skills of the students *in your classes*	70	68	71	70	77	71	68	74	67
Standardized tests that measure the improvement in skills of the students *in your entire school* compared to other schools in your state	60	58	62	64	64	59	60	66	58
Standardized tests that measure teachers' skills	60	55	66	65	74	59	59	65	58

IX.

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Overall Attitudes Toward Federal Involvement

America's teachers favor a greater role for the federal government in public school education (Table 29). A majority (55%) favor more federal funding and participation in education, and only 19% favor less federal participation. Twenty-four percent are satisfied with the current levels of federal funding and participation in education.

Majorities or pluralities of teachers in every subgroup analyzed (in Tables 29 and 30) favor greater federal participation. Support for increased federal participation is greatest among younger teachers, among teachers with less than ten years of experience, among teachers in the East, and among members of teachers' unions.

Observation: *Clearly, teachers are adamant in opposing cuts in federal funding for public schools, feeling as they do that their work is inadequately funded today.*

Evaluations of Tuition Payment Recommendations

There has been much political discussion in the last several years about offering interested parents an opportunity to receive federal support for children who are not in the public schools. Table 31 presents teachers' reactions to the most commonly discussed suggestions.

The results are dramatic. By 65-32%, teachers oppose a "voucher" system (which would provide fixed amounts for education, whether in public schools or in private schools), and 44% strongly oppose such a system. By 74-25%, teachers oppose tuition tax credits to families of children who do not attend public schools; fully 55% sharply oppose this suggestion.

Teachers in every subgroup studied are opposed to both suggestions. As Table 32 indicates, older teachers are particularly likely to oppose each plan. There is no significant difference by type of school.

Q.8

Table 29

GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY AGE

Q.: And now I'd like to ask a question about the federal government's role in education. Which one of the following would you most like to see?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			AGE		
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	18-29 YEARS	30-49 YEARS	50 OR OVER
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	186 %	1,308 %	483 %
MORE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	55	54	53	57	57	66	52	70	58	40
THE PRESENT AMOUNT OF FEDERAL FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	24	24	26	26	27	18	26	21	23	29
LESS FEDERAL FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	19	21	20	15	15	16	21	9	17	30
NOT SURE	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

Q.8

Table 30

GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT: BY REGION AND BY UNION MEMBERSHIP

Q.: And now I'd like to ask a question about the federal government's role in education. Which one of the following would you most like to see?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	REGION				UNION MEMBERSHIP	
		EAST	MIDWEST	SOUTH	WEST	YES	NO
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	684 %	414 %	602 %	281 %	1,539 %	438 %
MORE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	55	65	59	47	48	59	44
THE PRESENT AMOUNT OF FEDERAL FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	24	21	25	25	28	23	28
LESS FEDERAL FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION	19	12	17	25	23	17	26
NOT SURE	1	2	-	2	1	1	2

Table 31

EVALUATIONS OF TUITION PAYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Q.: Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following proposals?

NO. OF RESPONDENTS 1,981	STRONGLY FAVOR	SOMEWHAT FAVOR	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	STRONGLY OPPOSE	NOT SURE
	%	%	%	%	%
A "VOUCHER" SYSTEM WHERE REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF SCHOOL CHOSEN, A FAMILY WOULD RECEIVE A FIXED AMOUNT FOR THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION	9	23	21	44	2
GIVE TUITION TAX CREDITS TO FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS	9	16	19	55	1

Table 32

EVALUATIONS OF TUITION PAYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS: BY TYPE OF SCHOOL, BY EXPERIENCE, AND BY AGE

Q.: Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following proposals?

	TOTAL TEACHERS	TYPE OF SCHOOL			EXPERIENCE			AGE		
		ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL	LESS THAN 5 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10 YEARS OR MORE	18-29 YEARS	30-49 YEARS	50 OR OVER
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981 %	972 %	375 %	491 %	142 %	326 %	1,513 %	186 %	1,308 %	483 %
A "VOUCHER" SYSTEM WHERE REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF SCHOOL CHOSEN, A FAMILY WOULD RECEIVE A FIXED AMOUNT FOR THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION										
FAVOR	32	31	35	32	31	37	31	40	33	26
OPPOSE	66	66	63	67	65	59	67	57	65	71
NOT SURE	2	3	2	1	4	3	2	3	2	3
GIVE TUITION TAX CREDITS TO FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOLS										
FAVOR	26	26	26	23	35	27	24	33	25	23
OPPOSE	74	74	73	75	65	72	75	67	74	77
NOT SURE	1	*	1	1	–	1	1	–	1	–

*Less than 0.5%

APPENDIX A: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher was conducted for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company from March 21 through April 15, 1984. A total of 1,981 interviews were conducted among public school teachers throughout the continental United States. Eligible respondents were elementary school and secondary school teachers whose responsibilities include at least part-time teaching in the classroom.

Sample Selection

From a list of 1.2 million teachers (compiled by Market Data Retrieval of Westport, Connecticut) Louis Harris and Associates selected a random sample of teachers. Quotas for completed interviews were set by state, based on the proportion of elementary and secondary school classroom teachers in each state. The quotas were set in line with statistics published by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics.

Table A-1 shows the distribution of the teachers interviewed by type of school, by sex, and by region. As the table demonstrates, these figures closely parallel the statistics for teachers nationwide developed by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics.

Interviewing Procedures

Each selected teacher was contacted at his or her school by a representative of Louis Harris and Associates and requested to participate in the survey. When we could not reach a teacher directly, we left a message (including a toll-free number) to allow a return call.

Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each teacher was screened to ensure that he or she teaches in an elementary or secondary level public school and teaches at least part-time in the classroom. Once the teacher passed this screen, an appointment was made to telephone at a convenient time and complete the interview.

Table A-1

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

	TOTAL TEACHERS INTERVIEWED	ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS NATIONWIDE**
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	1,981	2,183,500
	%	%
Type of School		
Elementary	54***	54
Secondary	46***	46
Sex		
Male	34	33
Female	66	67
Region		
East	26	26
Midwest	26	26
South	31	31
West	16	16

**Based on the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics compilation of classroom teachers, 1980-81.

***Based on those teachers who work exclusively in either elementary or secondary schools.

Questionnaire Development

As an aid in defining the issues and formulating the subject areas to be included in the survey questionnaire, Louis Harris and Associates conducted four focus group discussions among elementary and secondary level public school teachers in March 1984. The locations and dates of these group discussions were as follows: Syracuse, New York–March 1, 1984; New York, New York–March 6, 1984; Dallas, Texas–March 7, 1984; and Los Angeles, California–Mrach 8, 1984. A total of 36 teachers participated in these four discussion groups. Two of the discussions were moderated by Joshua D. Libresco of Louis Harris and Associates and two were moderated by Robert P. Parker, also of Louis Harris and Associates. Representatives of Metropolitan Life observed each discussion.

A first draft of the questionnaire was pretested among a sample of 10 teachers on March 15, 1984. The lessons learned during this testing process provided important refinements to the survey questionnaire.

Many individuals contributed their comments to the survey questionnaire, and Louis Harris and Associates is extremely grateful for those contributions. However, final responsibility for the questionnaire rests with Louis Harris and Associates.

Processing of the Data

All completed questionnaires were edited and keypunched. The data were tabulated, checked for internal consistency, and processed by computer. The output of this process is a series of computer tables showing the results for each survey question, both by the total number of teachers interviewed and by important subgroupings of teachers.

Sample Disposition and Completion Rates

The final sample disposition for this survey is shown in Table A-2. A total of 4,409 contacts were made to yield 1,981 completed interviews.

Of all the teachers who were contacted at their schools or with whom a message was left, 61.5% were willing to talk to a Louis Harris and Associates interviewer. Although there are a number of different methods by which response rates can be calculated, we arrived at this 61.5% figure by comparing the number of teachers that we were able to reach to the complete list of teachers at their schools.

Of the teachers who were contacted by Louis Harris and Associates and who passed the screen, 89.8% completed an interview. We calculate this completion rate by dividing the number of completed interviews by the sum of (1) the number of completed interviews, (2) the number of interview refusals, (3) the number of interviews terminated within the course of the interview, and (4) the number of teachers who were left to call back at the time the survey was completed.

With reference to Table A-2, the response rate and the completion rate have been calculated according to the following formulas:

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{A+E+F+H+I+J}{A+E+F+G+H+I+J} = \frac{2313}{3761} = 61.5\%$$

$$\text{Completion Rate} = \frac{A}{A+E+H+J} = \frac{1981}{2206} = 89.8\%$$

The disposition of all 4,409 contacts is provided in Table A-2 so that interested individuals may make their own calculations of response rate and completion rate.

Table A-2

FINAL SAMPLE DISPOSITION

A. Completed interviews	1,981
B. Nonworking number	79
C. No longer at school/retired/deceased/on leave	404
D. No answer or busy (after three callbacks)	165
E. Interview refused	128
F. Noneligible respondent	104
G. Left message at school (never called back)	1,448
H. To call back (study completed before callback was needed)	90
I. Language barrier	3
J. Terminated within interview	7
K. Total number of contacts	4,409

Reliability of Survey Percentages

It is important to bear in mind that the results from any sample survey are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of this variation is measurable and is affected both by the number of interviews and by the level of the percentages expressing the results. Sampling variations are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of any one sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant.

Table A-3 shows the possible sample variation that applies to percentage results for this survey. The chances are 95 to 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points from the result that would have been obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. The first sample size figure shown corresponds to a total sample of 2,000 respondents.

Table A-3

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASKED QUESTION ON WHICH SURVEY RESULT IS BASED	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 10% or 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 20% or 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 30% or 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 40% or 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
2,000	1	2	2	2	2
1,500	2	2	2	3	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

Sampling tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of a sample (subgroup analysis). Table A-4 shows the percentage difference that must be obtained before a difference can be considered statistically significant. These figures, too, represent the 95% confidence level.

Table A-4

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ASKED QUESTION ON WHICH SURVEY RESULT IS BASED		SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 10% or 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 20% or 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 30% or 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 40% or 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
2,000 vs.	2,000	2	2	3	3	3
	1,000	2	3	4	4	4
	800	3	3	4	4	4
	600	3	4	4	5	5
	400	3	4	5	5	5
	200	4	6	7	7	7
	100	6	8	9	10	10
	50	9	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs.	1,000	3	4	4	4	4
	800	3	4	4	5	5
	600	3	4	5	5	5
	400	3	5	5	6	6
	200	5	6	7	7	8
	100	6	8	9	10	10
	50	9	11	13	14	14
800 vs.	800	3	4	4	5	5
	600	3	4	5	5	5
	400	4	5	6	6	6
	200	5	6	7	8	8
	100	6	8	10	10	10
	50	9	11	13	14	14
600 vs.	600	3	5	5	6	6
	400	4	5	6	6	6
	200	5	6	7	8	8
	100	6	8	10	10	11
	50	9	12	13	14	14
400 vs.	400	4	6	6	7	7
	200	5	7	8	8	8
	100	7	9	10	11	11
	50	9	12	13	14	15
200 vs.	200	6	8	9	10	10
	100	7	10	11	12	12
	50	9	12	14	15	15
100 vs.	100	8	11	13	14	14
	50	10	14	16	17	17
50 vs.	50	12	16	18	19	20

These errors account for sampling error only. Survey research is also susceptible to other errors, such as in data handling and in interviewer recording. The procedures followed by Louis Harris and Associates, however, keep errors of these kinds to a minimum.

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APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

61

LOUIS HARRIS
AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10111

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Questionnaire No. _____
5 - 6 - 7 - 8

Study No. 847002

March 1984

Sample Point No.: _____
10 - 11 - 12 - 13 - 14 - 15 - 16 - 17 - 18

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Telephone No. _____

Hello, I'm _____ from Louis Harris and Associates, the national opinion polling and research firm located in New York. We are conducting a national survey among teachers to evaluate some of their attitudes toward the American educational system, and we would like to ask you a few questions.

FROM OBSERVATION:

Respondent sex:

Male . . . . . (19(____ -1

Female . . . . . ____ -2

1. As you know, there has been much discussion recently about American education and especially about our primary and secondary public schools. Thinking about the public school in which you teach, how would you rate the quality of education in your school–excellent, good, fair or poor?

Excellent	(20(	-1
Good		-2
Fair		-3
Poor		-4
Not sure		-5

2a. All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job as a teacher in the public schools–very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied	(21(	-1
Somewhat satisfied		-2
Somewhat dissatisfied		-3
Very dissatisfied		-4
Not sure		-5

2b. Thinking about the current debate on education, would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that teachers' voices in general have been adequately heard?

Strongly agree	(22(	-1
Somewhat agree		-2
Somewhat disagree		-3
Strongly disagree		-4
Not sure		-5

2c: I would like to read you some statements people have made about their jobs. For each, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with the statement in terms of *your* own job as a teacher in the public schools.

READ EACH STATEMENT

ROTATE-START AT "X"	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE STRONGLY	NOT SURE
( ) **1.** My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary . . . . . (23(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5
( ) **2.** I am usually recognized for good performance . . . . . (24(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5
( ) **3.** I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching . . . . . (25(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5
( ) **4.** I love to teach . . . . . (26(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5
( ) **5.** The training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job preparing them for the classroom . . . . . (27(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5
( ) **6.** As a teacher, I feel respected in today's society . . . . . (28(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5
( ) **7.** I have to spend too much time on administrative tasks . . . . . (29(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5

3: Now I would like you to evaluate some more specific things about the public school at which you teach. I am going to read several criteria on which public schools can be judged. For each, please tell me whether you would rate *your* school excellent, good, fair, or poor on that criterion.

READ EACH ITEM

ROTATE–START AT "X"	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NOT SURE
( ) **1.** The school's physical facilities	(30(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **2.** The availability of teaching materials and supplies	(31(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **3.** The support of the administration in your school for the teachers	(32(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **4.** The quality of teachers in your school. . . .	(33(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **5.** The disciplinary policy of your school	(34(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **6.** The number of students in your classes. . .	(35(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **7.** The policy of your school regarding students with special needs	(36(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **8.** Parental and community support for the school	(37(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **9.** Academic standards in your school	(38(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( )**10.** Funds available for use by your school . . .	(39(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5
( ) **11.** The curriculum in general.	(40(___ –1	___ –2	___ –3	___ –4	___ –5

4. Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious in the public school in which you teach.

READ EACH ITEM

ROTATE-START AT "X"	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	NOT VERY SERIOUS	NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	NOT SURE
( ) **1.** Drinking	(41(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **2.** Lack of discipline	(42(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **3.** Students' lack of interest in their classes	(43(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **4.** Inadequate financial support for the school	(44(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **5.** Drugs	(45(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **6.** Difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers	(46(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **7.** Overcrowded classes	(47(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5
( ) **8.** Teachers' lack of interest in their work	(48(____ -1	____ -2	____ -3	____ -4	____ -5

5a: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of education. Based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on education in general.

READ EACH ITEM

ROTATE–START AT "X"	STRONGLY POSITIVE EFFECT	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE EFFECT	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE EFFECT	STRONGLY NEGATIVE EFFECT	NO EFFECT AT ALL (VOL.)	NOT SURE
( ) **1.** Establish minimum competency tests for students at predetermined grade levels . . . . . (49(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **2.** Emphasize basic skills, such as reading, writing, and math . . . . . (50(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **3.** Broaden the curriculum to include such things as computer literacy and foreign languages . . . . . (51(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **4.** Tighten graduation requirements to include more academically stringent subjects . . . . . (52(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **5.** Extend the length of the school day . . . . . (53(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **6.** Extend the length of the school year . . . . . (54(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **7.** Emphasize school discipline and safety . . . . . (55(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **8.** Increase the amount of homework required of students . . . . . (56(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6

5b: Now I am going to read you some suggestions for improving the quality of *teaching* in America's public schools. Again, based on your overall experience at your school, and whether or not your school already has such a policy, please tell me whether you think each suggestion would have a strongly positive effect, a somewhat positive effect, a somewhat negative effect, or a strongly negative effect on the quality of teaching in America's public schools.

READ EACH ITEM

ROTATE–START AT "X"	STRONGLY POSITIVE EFFECT	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE EFFECT	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE EFFECT	STRONGLY NEGATIVE EFFECT	NO EFFECT AT ALL (VOL.)	NOT SURE
( ) **1.** Require teachers to take competency tests before certification. . . . . (57(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **2.** Require new graduates to serve apprenticeships before they are certified as teachers . . . . . (58(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **3.** Establish career ladders that provide teachers with greater opportunities to take on more responsibility and pay . . . . . (59(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **4.** Set higher salaries for teachers who teach in science and math or other areas in which there are teacher shortages . . . . . (60(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **5.** Allow school districts to hire talented people who are not certified teachers . . . (61(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **6.** Require periodic retesting of teachers in their subject matter . . . . . (62(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **7.** Provide special incentives to encourage outstanding students to go into teaching . . . . . (63(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6
( ) **8.** Make it easier for incompetent teachers to be removed . . . . . (64(	____–1	____–2	____–3	____–4	____–5	____–6

6. For each of the following statements about merit pay, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

READ EACH STATEMENT

ROTATE-START AT "X"	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	DISAGREE STRONGLY	NOT SURE	REFUSED
( ) **1.** Merit pay would help to make teachers' salaries more comparable with salaries in other professions . . . . . (65(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6
( ) **2.** Merit pay is an effective way of attracting and retaining good teachers in the profession. . . . . (66(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6
( ) **3.** Merit pay could work if a teacher's merit can be judged on an objective standard . . . . . (67(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6

7. Several ways have been suggested to periodically measure teacher performance. For each one I read, please tell me, regardless of whether or not you are currently evaluated in that way, if you yourself would be very willing, somewhat willing, not very willing, or not willing at all to be measured on that basis.

READ EACH STATEMENT

ROTATE-START AT "X"	VERY WILLING	SOMEWHAT WILLING	NOT VERY WILLING	NOT WILLING AT ALL	NOT SURE	REFUSED
( ) **1.** Standardized tests that measure the improvement in skills of the students *in your classes* . . . . . (68(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6
( ) **2.** An evaluation of your overall performance by your administrator . . . . . (69(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6
( ) **3.** Standardized tests that measure the improvement in skills of the students *in your entire school* compared with students in other schools in your state . . . . . (70(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6
( ) **4.** An evaluation of your overall performance by a committee of teachers in your school, chosen by fellow teachers . . . . . (71(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6
( ) **5.** Standardized tests that measure teachers' skills. . . . . (72(	___-1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5	___-6

8. And now I'd like to ask a question about the federal government's role in education. Which one of the following would you most like to see?

READ LIST-SINGLE RECORD

DO NOT ROTATE

1. More federal government funding and participation in education ..... (73(___ -1
2. Less federal funding and participation in education ..... ___-2
3. The present amount of federal funding and participation in education ..... ___-3

Not sure ..... ___-4

9. Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each of the following proposals?

READ EACH STATEMENT

ROTATE-START AT "X"	STRONGLY FAVOR	SOMEWHAT FAVOR	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	STRONGLY OPPOSE	NOT SURE
( ) 1. Give tuition tax credits to families of children who do not attend public schools	(74(___ -1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5
( ) 2. A "voucher" system where regardless of the type of school chosen, a family would receive a fixed amount for their child's education.	(75(___ -1	___-2	___-3	___-4	___-5

TO BE ASKED OF EVERYONE

F1: These last few questions are for background purposes only. Do you teach in an elementary school, a junior high school, or a high school?

Elementary School	(34(-1
Junior high school	-2
High school	-3
Combination (vol.)	-4
Not sure	-5

F2: In an average week, how many hours do you spend, in total, on school-related responsibilities–including all responsibilities in the classroom, any responsibilities outside the classroom, and any work you do at home?

READ CATEGORIES IF NECESSARY

Less than 26 hours	(35(-1
26-30 hours	-2
31-35 hours	-3
36-40 hours	-4
41-45 hours	-5
46-50 hours	-6
51-55 hours	-7
More than 55 hours	-8
Not sure	-9

F3: Of the total hours you spend in an average week on school-related responsibilities, what *percent* would you say is on duties you consider to be related to teaching students in your classes?

READ CATEGORIES IF NECESSARY

0-10%	(36(-1
11%-20%	-2
21%-30%	-3
31%-40%	-4
41%-50%	-5
51%-60%	-6
More than 60%	-7
Not sure	-8

F4: Regardless of the types of schools you've taught in, for about how many years, in total, have you worked as a teacher?

READ CATEGORIES IF NECESSARY

Less than 1 year	(37(-1
At least 1 year, but less than 3 years	-2
At least 3 years, but less than 5 years	-3
At least 5 years, but less than 10 years	-4
At least 10 years, but less than 15 years	-5
At least 15 years, but less than 20 years	-6
20 years or more	-7
Not sure	-8

F5: Do you have a tenured teaching position?

Yes, have tenured position ..... (38(____ -1
No, don't have tenured position ..... ____ -2
Not sure ..... ____ -3

F6: Are you a member of a teachers' union?

Yes, member ..... (39(____ -1
No, not a member ..... ____ -2
Not sure ..... ____ -3

F7: What was the *last* grade or level of school that you yourself completed?

READ LIST IF NECESSARY

Less than high school graduate ..... (40(____ -1
High school graduate ..... ____ -2
Some college ..... ____ -3
Two-year college graduate ..... ____ -4
} ——— (SKIP TO Q.F9)

Four-year college graduate ..... ____ -5
Master's completed ..... ____ -6
Credits beyond master's ..... ____ -7
Ph.D. completed ..... ____ -8
} ——— (ASK Q.F8)

F8: Was your undergraduate college major in education or in some academic subject area?

Education ..... (41(____ -1
Academic subject ..... ____ -2
Both (vol.) ..... ____ -3
Not sure ..... ____ -4

ASK EVERYONE

F9: How old are you?

IF HESITANT, READ LIST

18 to 20 years ..... (42(____ -1
21 to 24 years ..... ____ -2
25 to 29 years ..... ____ -3
30 to 34 years ..... ____ -4
35 to 39 years ..... ____ -5
40 to 49 years ..... ____ -6
50 to 64 years ..... ____ -7
65 or over ..... ____ -8

F10: Are you single, married, divorced, widowed, or separated?

Single ..... (43(____ -1
Married ..... ____ -2
Divorced/widowed/separated ..... ____ -3

F11: Do you have any children?

Yes, have children	(44(___ -1	(ASK Q.F12)
No, don't have children	___ -2	(SKIP TO Q.F13)

F12: Do your children attend public schools, private schools, or parochial schools?

MULTIPLE RECORD IF NECESSARY

Public	(45(___ -1
Private	___ -2
Parochial	___ -3
None old enough for school (vol.)	___ -4
Not sure	___ -5

ASK EVERYONE

F13: In addition to your teaching activities, do you work for any employer other than the school system at any time during the year?

Yes, work for other employer	(46(___ -1	(ASK Q.F14)
No, don't work for other employer	___ -2	(SKIP TO Q.F15)
Not sure	___ -3	(SKIP TO Q.F15)

F14: Is this employment during the summer only, during the school year only, or is it during both of these time periods?

Summer only	(47(___ -1
School year only	___ -2
During both periods	___ -3
Not sure	___ -4

ASK EVERYONE

F15: Which of the following income categories best describes your total 1983 *household* income from all sources, before taxes? Was it (READ LIST)?

$15,000 or less	(48(___ -1
$15,001 to $20,000	___ -2
$20,001 to $30,000	___ -3
$30,001 to $40,000	___ -4
$40,001 to $50,000	___ -5
$50,001 or over	___ -6
Not sure	___ -7

49-80Z

That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your cooperation!